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INSIDE BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY Class capitalizes on new technology

Graduate students in music are benefiting from an experiment with new videoconferencing technology.

Paul Goldstaub, a composer and associate professor of music at Binghamton, and Na Rong, a composer and doctoral student at the Manhattan School of Music, facilitated an unusual exchange April 10.

Days earlier, Rong had given Goldstaub's composition students two measures and asked them to build upon the music. The students had to write the music and work with student performers for an informal "teleconcert" in class less than a week later.

Thanks to videoconferencing technology with high-quality audio — provided with support from Academic Computing and Educational Communications — Rong was able to listen to the new compositions and offer her opinions and suggestions on the spot.



She had praise for the students' efforts as well as ideas about how the pieces could be improved. In several instances, she referred to composers and music she thought the students might find helpful or interesting.

Students Akira Maezawa, violinist, and Shane Thorn, composer, perform for Na Rong, a composer and doctoral student at the Manhattan School of Music, during a teleconference organized by Paul Goldstaub, associate professor of music. Jeffrey Donahue, right,

Master's student Filippo Santoro confessed he didn't initially like the theme Rong offered. But he said it did encourage him to write for oboe.

After Max Rosenberg performed Santoro's piece, Rong asked Santoro to experiment with a less traditional structure. She also complimented him on his notation.

Senior Akira Maezawa performed a piece written by master's student Shane Thorn.

Rong told Thorn he had done an excellent job, especially given the time constraints, but that she felt he could do more with less. Develop one idea more fully, she advised, rather than trying to fit everything into one page of music.

Master's student Tomek Regulski presented the short piece building on Rong's two measures as well as a longer vocal work titled *The Glance*, which builds on a poem titled *Orpheus and Euridice*.

"The vocal writing is brilliant," Rong told him. She noted the rhythm could be more flowing and encouraged him to see the voice as an instrument.

"I tried to use the full spectrum that the voice



Na Rong of the Manhattan School of Music offers a critique during the videoconference.

could offer," Regulski said, adding that he plans to work on the piece some more.

Master's student Gabriel Luce also presented a longer composition, titled *Escapade of a Curious Cricket*. It began as an exercise in sonata form; now he hopes it will become his first sonata.

After hearing the piece, which features clarinet and piano, Rong suggested Luce use more articulation in his score and explore more registers of the instruments.

Then she asked Santoro, who was playing piano for the piece, to play several octaves higher while clarinetist Matthew Hassell played an octave lower. The musicians gave it a try and were met with applause from the small audience in the classroom.

"It's a joy to use the new technology," Goldstaub said as the musicians packed up.

It's also an achievement for his students. "They know how their music stacks up," he said. "Look at the creativity this generated."

The composers plan to "meet" again April 28 for another musical experiment.